

**au where
pennywise is the
general concept of
distance**

eddiespaghetti (foxwatson)

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Genre: Alternate Universe - Modern Setting, M/M, Multi, No Pennywise AU, that's right it's a group chat fic

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Mike Hanlon, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris

Relationships: Ben Hanscom/OMC, Beverly Marsh/Original Female Character(s), Bill Denbrough/Mike Hanlon, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris/OMC

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Summary:

bill added stan, richie, eddie, mike, ben, and bev to The Losers Squad™

An au where the losers met online rather than in person, so their biggest enemy is distance, not a horrifying demon clown. Richie/Eddie centric.

1. The Losers Squad™

Author's Note:

so the basic intro information here is that the losers are all in college in different places, so they're all about 18/19 here - they've never met in person. there's no big reveal here where they've secretly forgotten each other, i promise. the other thing i wanna say bc i'm not sure it's clear in the fic is that bill's parents are sort of absent so he's basically raising georgie, who's just barely 13. i think most of the other important stuff you can glean from the fic. i hope you enjoy!

bill added stan, richie, eddie, mike, ben, and bev to *The Losers Squad™*

bill: Hello, I've Gathered You All Here In One Place Because

bill: oh god that's gonna get annoying never mind

bill: i'm sick of the fact that we keep just watching stuff on rabb.it together and clogging up the notes on random people's posts and somehow trying to like. all talk over tumblr messages and peach when we could just have a group chat, so here we are, in a group chat

richie: those people should be goddamn grateful to be witness to our conversations billiam i don't know what you're talking about

stan: Richie nobody's that grateful for your jokes, I promise

richie: they're just lost on you guys, they're better in person

stan: Somehow I Doubt This

richie: where's eddie, eddie would defend me

eddie: why do you think i would defend you

richie: :^(

eddie: your nose doesn't even look like that, it'd be more like a little sideways L

richie: why am i friends with you guys

ben: because you love us!

richie: benoathy please i have an image to maintain here

eddie: richie nobody likes your dumb nicknames

mike: eddie i'm pretty sure you're the only one that really minds

richie: see? micycle's got my back! and you love it eddie spaghetti, don't lie to me

mike: you know what i changed my mind, he's right richie, no one likes your nicknames

richie: i can't believe i'm being bullied in this group chat, stop the bullying 2k17

bev: i don't even know why i'm here except to watch you all make idiots out of yourselves

stan: Isn't that all you ever really do Bev?

bev: tru

bev: that and be gay on the internet, those are really my two pasttimes

eddie: oh mood

richie: mood

bill: what a great day to remember no one in this group chat is straight

richie: straight people are fake bill, we all know, they're just a conspiracy made up by the government

ben: i think i knew a straight guy once, he was in my math class

richie: fake news ben! don't lie to the people like this

stan: Why am I not surprised Richie talks more in this group chat than anyone

richie: what can i say, it's a gift

richie: maybe all you nerds just type slow did you ever think of that

eddie: richie you wear glasses that look like you bought them in 1989, where the fuck do you get off calling the rest of us nerds

richie: and you wear short shorts, what does this have to do with anything

eddie: i truly hate you

richie: love you too eddie spaghetti

stan: Don't you two have your own texts for this

eddie: if by that you mean "do we have a whatsapp chat for just the two of us where richie just sends me annoying voice messages where he practices his accents," then yes, technically

richie: that's not the only thing in our whatsapp staniel don't let him lie to you

stan: Oh god the nicknames are back, time for me to mute

ben: stan wait!

ben: goodnight <3

stan: yeah, alright, goodnight guys

mike: goodnight stan!

richie: have good sleep staniel

eddie: night, stan!

bill: goodnight stan <3

bev: gnight stan!

richie: so now what

mike: i should probably go to bed, too, i've gotta be up early to help my grandfather with the farm stuff like always. i had fun tonight, though, watching stuff with you guys! and thanks for starting this group chat, bill, this was a sweet idea

bill: aw thanks mike <3

richie: mike you're too good for us why are you even here

mike: because you're my friends, loser

richie: sounds fake

mike: shut up and go to bed richie

richie: i never sleep, i don't know what you're talking about micyle

mike: you've gotta stop.

bev: oh punctuation, that's some serious shit you've gotten yourself into richie

mike: with that parting shot, i really do need to go. goodnight guys, talk to you tomorrow

ben: goodnight mike! <3

bill: goodnight mike

bev: gnight!

eddie: night!

richie: we literally just did this i cannot keep doing this, there's too many of us

richie: but also wow we're dropping like flies who's next

eddie: as the only one left on the east coast i feel like it should be me,
but we all know it won't be

richie: why's that eds

eddie: fuck off that's why

bill: if i didn't know any better i'd have no clue why you guys were
friends

eddie: i don't even know why we're friends

richie: eddie baby you don't mean that

eddie: richie don't start

bev: i'm starting to feel a little out of place in this group chat

eddie: bev :(

richie: bev no we love you

bev: i'm 100% kidding i just like to give you guys shit

richie: bev you're not allowed to be funnier than me

ben: richie bev's always funnier than you

richie: Benothy Please I Thought I Could Trust You

ben: you can trust me, but bev's funnier

bev: wow ben's savage

richie: do you mean he's ben savage

bill: richie that was the worst joke you've ever made

eddie: bill you took the words right out of my mouth

richie: maybe I'll go to bed, huh? then what'll you guys do?

eddie: have some peace?

richie: fine okay maybe i will shut up then

bill: i actually should probably be going to bed, too, i have to get georgie up in the morning and stuff

bill: i'll talk to you guys tomorrow night

eddie: talk to you tomorrow bill! tell georgie hi

bill: i always do

bev: tell your brother he's the cutest kid in the world

bill: i also always do. anything else?

ben: no just goodnight and tell him hi from everyone not just eddie!

bill: alright, goodnight guys

ben: goodnight!

bev: gnight

eddie: night!

eddie: wait did richie actually leave

bev: i mean it seems like it he's not saying anything

eddie: oh god dammit

ben: i think since we're all kind of leaving i'm gonna go to bed

bev: yeah i may as well

eddie: okay, goodnight guys, i'll talk to you tomorrow

ben: goodnight eddie!

who ya gonna call? (richie and eddie)

eddie: richie where the fuck did you go

eddie: richie come on

eddie: we were kidding. i mean i was kidding. i'm always kidding

eddie: oh god you're probably just in the shower and you're gonna make fun of me for the next decade i hate you so much

richie: eddie i was gone for like ten minutes

eddie: I THOUGHT YOU WERE ACTUALLY UPSET DIPSHIT

eddie: i don't know i was afraid you had a bad day and i was being too mean or something

richie: eds i knew you were kidding

eddie: shut up don't call me that

richie: you're so cute

eddie: you're so dumb

eddie: did i mention i hate you

richie: no you don't

eddie: no i don't. but if you screenshot this i'll come to your home and kill you i know where you live

richie: you never follow through on that

eddie: Someday Tozier

richie: that's what you always say

eddie: are you gonna send me a voice message you haven't sent one today

richie: are you asking me to send you a voice message

eddie: oh my god no i am not, you just always do

richie: yeah alright

richie: [1:32] *Okay so I'm working on my Donald Duck impression what*

do you think? [1 full minute of indecipherable quacking noises] Am I a real internet voice actor yet? You think I can start doing like dramatic readings and impressions? Should I sing something in Donald's voice? That's how all the big like tumblr voice people do it right they take like voice requests. Do you have any requests?

eddie: my request is that you stop, that was terrible. that was like the worst one you've ever done, i could not tell at all what you were saying

richie: i mean nobody can tell what donald duck's saying either

eddie: okay you're not wrong but also i hate you

eddie: donald duck isn't even relevant anymore

richie: kingdom hearts, dude!

eddie: i mean technically yes, but everyone hates him, so

richie: he's useless, you're right

eddie: richie i know i'm right i've played kingdom hearts

richie: i mean thank god because otherwise i'd have to disown you

eddie: you should go to bed

richie: i should go to bed??? YOU should go to bed dipshit it's like 4 am where you live

eddie: yeah but. i don't want to

richie: oh. are you having those nightmares again?

eddie: sort of, yeah.

richie: like the ones you told me about

eddie: yeah

richie: i'm sorry eds. i wish there was something i could do

eddie: i mean this helps. just. i don't know talking helps. thanks for staying up

richie: i mean it's not that late for me it's only like 1 here, that's nothing for me

eddie: why do you live literally all the way on the other side of the country

richie: i don't know because distance is fucking evil

eddie: yeah true

eddie: i'm probably gonna like pass out soon i should go

eddie: goodnight richie. love you

richie: yeah, love you too eds. try and get some sleep. text me tomorrow if you need

eddie: yeah of course <3 thanks again

richie: no problem

Notes for the Chapter:

okay so i jumped on the bandwagon and wrote a group chat fic, sue me. this is like lkajsd the silliest concept i've ever written? but at the same time it's not as silly as i thought it would be, and i kind of like it? hopefully you guys do too. the fic is already basically done, and i'm gonna be posting a chapter a day until it all gets posted - i have some things up

my sleeve that make this a little different from other group chat fics, even just aside from the fact that this is literally an au. let me know what you think!

2. the gang discovers voice messages

Summary for the Chapter:

the losers discover a basic function of whatsapp and enjoy some gay friendship bonding

who ya gonna call?

richie: hey how'd sleep go?

eddie: i mean. it could have been worse

richie: meaning?

eddie: meaning the dream was. different. it wasn't as bad.

richie: you wanna talk about it?

eddie: i don't know i mean it's kind of dumb it just

eddie: like the bad part was still there it was just everyone like all the other losers were there too. and you guys saved me. like it went from that. thing the scary thing into this weird fucking clown and then we all beat it up

richie: that sounds sick except i fucking hate clowns

eddie: it was pretty awesome. you hit it with a baseball bat

richie: wow yeah i would absolutely beat the shit out of a clown with a baseball bat, especially if it said that shit to you

eddie: wow my hero

richie: i'm only doing my job sir

eddie: you're the worst. i've gotta go i'm gonna be late for class

richie: talk to you later

The Losers Squad TM

richie: do you guys think you could bribe eddie into sending me a voice message

bill: you know he'll see this later, right?

richie: well yeah but he's in class. even if he does scroll up it'll be too late

mike: why do you wanna bribe him why don't you just ask him

richie: i mean i did once. it's been a while i guess

ben: i'd love to know what all you guys sound like! i mean richie i know what you sound like from your videos and voices and stuff but i don't know what the rest of you sound like!

richie: are we all gonna send voice messages that would actually be sick

mike: sure i'll do it

bill: do we have to

bev: do you not want to bill?

bill: i mean. not really

ben: why not?

bill: i just don't really want you guys to hear me, there's a reason i don't do stuff like that. and why i just play music when i draw.

richie: oh. yeah, dude, you don't have to.

bill: thanks richie

bill: i'd still like to hear you guys though? i think people should if they're comfortable sharing.

richie: i mean i'll fucking do it

richie: [0:32] *Okay actually this is really fucking awkward I have no idea what to say. I don't think I've ever talked in my own normal voice to you guys for this long. Or. You know where you guys could hear it. Maybe once to Eddie, but that's. Y'know. Okay this is fucking weird I'm done now, bye.*

ben: oh richie you're right i'm not sure i've ever heard you not doing a voice before!

richie: this is weirder than i thought it would be i'm never talking again

stan: Well that would be a miracle

ben: oh hi stan!

stan: I'm in for the voice message thing if you guys want

stan: [0:28] *For once I have to say, Richie is right. This is very strange. But hi, everyone. I hope you're all doing well. I hope classes are good. Actually Richie may have downplayed just how weird this is, this is weird shit, I'm gonna go ahead and stop now.*

mike: i mean i don't think it'd be this weird if we all did it more often you know, but since this is the first time

mike: [0:48] *Hey, guys! So - sorry ignore the chickens in the background, I'm outside working because I don't have class until later. So I guess you can sort of get a feel for what it's actually like where I live! It sounds like this basically all the time. I mean, less so in the house, but once you're anywhere near the chickens. I'm talking about the chickens too much, aren't I? We have other animals, too. Not that I'm just gonna talk about animals. Uh. I love you guys. Hope you're good. I really think we should do this more often, just. As a way to talk and stuff? It's kind of cool.*

ben: so i can't actually send one right now because i'm on the quiet floor in the library, but i will later!

bev: i can do one now

bev: [0:24] *Hey, losers. I have to agree with Mike that this is kind of neat. It'd be nice to get across tone sometimes, y'know? And it's easier to tell stories this way, like if I had a big thing I wanted to tell you guys, something that happened in a class or something that I didn't wanna post*

on tumblr where it might get like a thousand notes out of nowhere. Just my two cents.

ben: bev you have such a good voice!

bev: aw thanks ben <3

bill: it's really nice to hear all you guys. and i'm excited to hear yours, too, ben.

mike: bill do you wanna say why you don't wanna do one?

bill: not right now

eddie: boy you go to one class and you miss fucking everything, huh. don't you guys have class?

richie: not this early spaghetti man, you're the only one that hates yourself that much

eddie: rich oh my god please

eddie: also oh my god that was like a hundred years ago you asked me for a voice message i'd send you one now

eddie: i just. sort of hate my voice.

richie: what why??????

ben: eddie :(

eddie: it's just like. really kind of. high pitched. i don't know i don't like it

bill: eddie would you feel better if i did one

eddie: oh bill you don't have to

bill: i will if you will

eddie: you wanna tell us why first?

bill: yeah i guess i should, before i do.

bill: i just have a stutter. i have since i was a kid. i've done some speech therapy so it's not as bad as it used to be. just. i kind of like that it doesn't come across online

bev: bill i'm sure you still sound great

bill: i just didn't want you guys to think of me like that

mike: it won't change anything bill. you're still everyone's favorite

richie: i abstain from picking favorites

mike: you're everyone but richie's favorite, but don't take that personally, we all know who his favorite is

richie: you don't have to call me out like this mike

eddie: what who's richie's favorite?

bev: oh my god you're all useless. except bill, bill you're not useless and please feel free to send us a message at any time and put us all out of our misery

bill: [0:53] *S-s-sorry I have to talk sort of. Slow. It helps with the... stutter. When I slow down. Like Mike said I hope you're all having a good day. Eddie I hope this makes you feel better about sharing. I guess I wouldn't mind doing this more now that we've done it. I'm not s-sure. I'm not sure what else to say either, though. I love you guys. I know if we'd met and you'd heard me we'd still be friends anyways, I just. You know it*

was nice to know you didn't know and you c-c-couldn't change your mind based on that. Oh. And G-georgie says hi to everyone.

eddie: god i guess that means it's my turn

eddie: [0:34] *Okay, hi. Hi, everyone. I think I'm just sort of self-conscious because people have like said stuff to me before about how gay I sound, which. Obviously that shouldn't bother me, I am gay, but it's also more than a little annoying, I don't know. I'm sure you guys get it, you always get it. Um. Hi, Richie. God this is weird to know this is the first time you're hearing me talk if you hate my voice don't say anything. I'm gonna stop talking now.*

richie: eddie oh my god

eddie: oh god i mean it don't say anything

richie: i love your voice and i will fight anyone who's ever said anything to you

eddie: oh

ben: everyone sounds great, i love you guys!

bill: yeah i have to say i love you guys, too

stan: Ditto

richie: I Love Everyone In This Chat

eddie: love you guys

mike: oh man i love you guys too

bev: this is so sweet, i feel the power of gay friendship in this chili's tonight

bev: i'm screenshotting that

bev: ben don't forget to send your voice message when you can!

ben: yeah i'm leaving the library now!

ben: [0:42] *Gosh, okay, hey guys! It feels like there's so much pressure now that I'm last that's so weird. Um. So I was just in the library, like I said, and I was on the silent floor, and this guy at the next table just had like a bunch of hard-boiled eggs with him? I guess it was a snack or something but it was one of the weirdest things I've ever seen in the library. He was also clearly not a student, so that was interesting. Overall pretty weird. Just thought I'd take the chance to share. Oh also I actually said hey to that cute guy that works at the library today, the guy that works the shift I don't work! Okay now I'm done, bye.*

richie: ben holy shit

bill: oh wow thank you for that ben

bev: i'm so glad you're talking to your library crush that's so cute!

ben: i really don't think i could have made that up if i tried

ben: i mean the egg guy, but thanks bev <3

stan: Tag yourself i'm the egg guy

richie: stan you would be the fucking egg guy

mike: stan aren't you vegan?

stan: That's the joke, Michael

richie: lksjdfkjasldfkjlkjas fuck

eddie: richie you're such a dumbass

richie: yeah fine but i'm your dumbass

eddie: literally in what sense are you my dumbass, i am not responsible for you

richie: okay well you got me there

bev: bill does it ever get any less painful you've known them the longest

bill: no not really

richie: what the fuck are you guys talking about?

eddie: seriously

bev: nothing

who ya gonna call?

richie: can you send me another voice message. but like here? so it's just. here?

eddie: why?

richie: i kind of just want one. is that okay?

eddie: yeah okay, i guess that's only fair after all the ones you've sent me

eddie: [2:03] *Hey. Okay. So. Hi, Richie. This is. Still kind of weird? I guess it's less weird now that I know you know what I sound like. That's. Actually kind of nice that you know and you're not laughing at me secretly. I think I'd know if you were. God, how long have we known each other? It's like. Multiple years now isn't it? That's fucking crazy, Rich. I just can't believe you live in California, it's so far. I'd have to fly, and it's expensive, it - not. Not saying you'd want me to visit. I mean, okay, I guess we have kind of established it would be nice to meet, right? So that's not weird for me to say. I don't know. Do you ever... Do you ever think about... I don't know how to put this. Just sometimes I think about the people who like go to your college that see you every day and don't. Appreciate that. I know you have people you talk to at school, you've told me about some of them, but I still feel like they don't know how lucky they are that they actually get to know you. God okay, that actually is weird to say, isn't it? And this is kind of getting long, this is way longer than anything anyone sent to the group chat today, and now I'm sort of rambling, I'm sorry. I kind of like talking at you, I think. Maybe we should. Do this more. And you should definitely send me messages not in a voice more. You have a good voice you know? Like it'd be a good radio voice. Not that people listen to the radio. But maybe like a good podcast voice. Okay, god, I'm done now. Sorry.*

richie: oh wow

eddie: i'm sorry that was weird wasn't it

richie: eds no it's fine

eddie: okay. if you say so

richie: should i send you one?

eddie: yeah. please. if you want to

richie: [3:11] *Okay. God this is really weird like having no intention of doing a voice at you and just. sending you this. I mean I've sent you dumb jokes but I really don't know that I've even sent you a full length message like this like. As me. Still, I'm gonna. I'm gonna talk about the stuff you talked about and maybe then you'll feel less weird. So. It's not weird that you wanna fly here. If I had the money I'd be at your school like literally every weekend, Eds. You're my best friend. You'd pretty much never get rid of me. But I don't have any fucking money so we're just kind of stuck like this, which is dumb. Someday one of us'll have money, though. And I... I actually think about that. All the fucking time. I mean the shit you said about... about how people that get to see you every day are so fucking lucky and they have no idea? Just. I think about that all the time. And especially today when you said people talk shit about your voice, your voice is perfect, Eds. It's. It sounds just like. You. Like it sounds like you. It's not how I pictured you sounding because I didn't know how to imagine your voice, you know? But now that I've heard it, that's your voice. You know? See now I make even less sense than you, does that make you feel better? Fuck. Uh. What else did you say? I guess that's sort of it, huh? So now it's time for me to pull some dumb shit or come up with a story to tell you so you can forget all the other shit I just said. So. Oh! Yeah I've got one. Okay so the other day I was at the arcade - it's actually a barcade because nobody has fucking arcades anymore which is the bane of my*

existence, but they don't card on like early weekday nights so if I go on Monday or Tuesday and get there early enough I can go downstairs and play arcade games, so. I was down there, and I spent most of my money fucking around on Street Fighter like I always do, but then I was running low on tokens, and I decided I'd play some skeeball, which seemed like. Completely boring and normal, especially since I was totally sober, but I guess my hands were like sweaty from all the Street Fighter or something, and when I went to throw the first ball, I just fucking chucked it, and it bounced off the machine and cracked the plastic thing at the top, and then when it came back it like hit me directly in the face. Not my nose or anything, so nothing was broken but. Let me tell you, skeeballs are not soft. In any capacity. Just if you ever wondered. If you wanted to know. Anyways, you don't have to be worried I'm not really hurt, so hopefully it's just funny and now you'll just forget literally everything else that I've said. Oh God this one is longer than yours now. Like by a lot. Shit. Uh. Right I'm gonna stop recording now and shut up, so. I hope this is good enough.

eddie: thanks rich

richie: for what?

eddie: i don't know, i mean. all of it mostly

richie: yeah, alright you sap

eddie: don't ruin it fuckface

richie: now who's ruining it?

eddie: i'm glad that you said that stuff about us hanging out though because i might have. figured something out the other day

eddie: i'm not saying anything yet because there's absolutely nothing solid happening but. i had an idea

richie: so you're not sharing the idea you're just gonna leave me here to suffer

eddie: yep

richie: that's just mean eds

eddie: that's possible

eddie: i'm actually surprisingly tired tonight i think i'm gonna go to bed

richie: you sure? i can stay up for a bit with you if you need me to

eddie: no i think i'll be okay, but thank you

richie: yeah of course

eddie: love you rich <3 talk to you tomorrow

richie: love you too. talk to you tomorrow eds

Notes for the Chapter:

you guys get one more chapter of relative bliss
before the conflict and angst comes for you, i hope
you enjoy it kljsdf

3. i'm richie i'm 19 and i never fucking learned how to read

Summary for the Chapter:

gay playlists and facetime calls

who ya gonna call?

richie: eddie

richie: eds

eddie: you're up early for you. what?

richie: okay well first of all how'd you sleep

eddie: really. surprisingly well actually. how are you? what's up?

richie: i was listening to your spotify playlist, the like. four hour long one that i made that bet with you about that i'll never be able to pay back

richie: and i have some news for you

eddie: i already regret asking, but what is it

richie: eds. babe. i think you might be gay

eddie: this is why you texted me urgently at 10 am your time. to tell me i'm gay

richie: yep

eddie: why are we friends

richie: because you love me

eddie: i'm not responding to that right now

richie: eds :^(

eddie: i stand by the fact that your smilies need different noses but i don't know how to do that for you so i'm just going to keep complaining

richie: i'll see what i can do for you

richie: but seriously eddie. seriously. it's raining men

eddie: i am gay and i am not ashamed of this

richie: true you do have those rainbow shorts

eddie: it's not technically a rainbow

richie: you bought it because it looks like a rainbow and you know it
you big gay

eddie: stop calling me out when i don't even know why you're awake

richie: okay well. i was actually trying to apply for another job so i
could save some money

eddie: oh. for what?

richie: so i could come to new york, dipshit

eddie: you really went out looking for jobs?

richie: yeah? is that weird?

eddie: no it's just. sweet

richie: why mr. eddie spaghetti i think that's the nicest thing you've ever said to me

eddie: and the moment is gone. it's over. goodbye moment

richie: aw eds

eddie: nope stop calling me that, goodbye

The Losers Squad TM

eddie: so how's everyone else doing today, because richie started his day by texting me to tell me i'm gay

bev: richie i think you're a little behind there

richie: i just wanted to make sure he knew is that a crime?

bill: you wanted to make sure that eddie kaspbrak knew he was gay

mike: eddie's the gayest guy i know

stan: I'll even admit that eddie's gayer than me, which is fairly impressive

bev: eddie and i are the gayest people in this chat with stan in a very close second

ben: eddie's an inspiration

richie: look it's not like i didn't know he was gay but have you guys seen his spotify playlist? the like four hour long one?

bill: eddie your spotify playlist is four hours long?

eddie: i'm very indecisive

bill: my longest one is like two hours

bev: one time i made a really long one for a roadtrip. this is just for fun?

eddie: i enjoy making playlists. i won't be shamed

mike: it really does add to the gay doesn't it

eddie: thank you mike i'll take that as a compliment

mike: i meant it as one, this is a great playlist

richie: i feel like there are words being put into my mouth here

ben: what was your point then, richie?

richie: my point was that i was listening to his playlist this morning, and it's raining men was on there, and i was just overwhelmed with the knowledge of eddie's gayness and i thought i should remind him. it was only a considerate gesture

eddie: it was just funny, mostly

richie: i can't believe you had to out me to the whole chat just to give me shit

bev: to be fair that is a major purpose of this chat

mike: what are the purposes of this chat?

bev: well one is to give shit to richie.

mike: one is definitely gay love and friendship

ben: giving richie shit, the power of gay friendship, and complaining about school. that's it, right?

stan: Sounds right to me

bev: definitely sounds right to me

stan: Speaking of complaining about school, can i complain?

bill: fire away stan

mike: yeah please do

stan: You guys remember that asshole I told you about in my shitty gen ed class that tried to use my yarmulke as a frisbee?

bill: the one that looks like kylo ren?

richie: you mean kyle ron

stan: Nice attempt at a meme there, richie

richie: how dare you besmirch my meming skills

richie: shit memeing

richie: shit they both look wrong how the fuck do you spell that

stan: How do you even know the word besmirch? Was it eddie

richie: i can read i'll have you know

eddie: rich you reblogged that "i'm 19 and i never fucking learned how to read" vine like 80 times and every single time you tagged it M E

eddie: also one time you sent me a voice message of you just going "what's up i'm richie i'm 19 and i never fucking learned how to read"

richie: have you guys ever heard of a joke

stan: Have you ever actually read a book? I have my doubts

richie: books are hard, staniel

ben: stan what happened with that guy?

stan: Oh yeah. Well he kept talking shit to me, you know, which was the part I wanted to complain about, but then today I found out my professor kicked him out of the class. She basically made him drop because she said she wouldn't stand for that kind of behavior in her class. It was amazing. I'd go straight for her

eddie: stan ew

richie: remind me never to talk about a girl around you eds

eddie: you literally never have because you know better

richie: god dammit

eddie: you're really off your game today. you should have slept more

richie: yeah well i was BUSY wasn't i?

bill: were you guys doing something last night?

eddie: no we just exchanged voice messages and went to bed, don't be weird, bill

mike: to be fair to bill, we never really know what you guys might get up to

stan: I agree with Mike

eddie: we don't even live in the same place we live as far apart as possible, what could we get up to?

bev: you could probably hack other people's accounts or do all kinds of weird stuff over video chat

eddie: bev you're not helping

richie: we've never done video chat anyways bev

ben: wait really?? you guys have never skyped or facetimed or anything? but you talk like every day

richie: we all talk every day benoathy that's what this group chat is

eddie: are we being shamed

mike: no one's shaming you guys

mike: or at least we shouldn't be

eddie: okay

richie: sounds fake i'm feeling pretty shamed

stan: There might be a little shaming

bill: come on let's leave richie and eddie alone

richie: thanks for defending our honor billiam

bev: i never knew the definition of the elephant in the room before i joined this chat

bill: bev hush

eddie: why are our friends so weird

richie: i mean we're all pretty weird

eddie: you got me there

bill: i've gotta make sure georgie goes to bed but he agrees that we're all weird

eddie: oh tell him we love him!

bill: i will but he could hit an angsty teenager phase at any moment

bill: just kidding he says he loves you guys, i'm so lucky my brother is the nicest teenager on the planet

richie: if he does ever go punk or anything let us know i'd be stoked

mike: i feel like i was a pretty nice teenager, it's just that a bunch of assholes in my hometown were racist and awful and one time i punched one of them in the face. but that aside

richie: mm you shoulda just killed him

mike: well look maybe i pushed him down a well but he didn't die so

richie: YOU PUSHED A DUDE DOWN A WELL MIKE THAT'S SICK

richie: LIKE FUCKING AWESOME

bev: oh my god mike you pushed a guy down a well

mike: well he lived! anyways he was a terrible fucking guy i'm not gonna feel bad about it

bill: mike you just got even cooler and i didn't even think that was possible

mike: oh. thanks guys

eddie: mike we've always got your back if you're gonna push racist assholes down wells

ben: definitely

stan: You're an inspiration Mike, I gotta keep an eye out for wells around campus

mike: and this is why we're friends. but you're definitely all still weird

mike: i promise i won't push any of you down a well

bill: thanks buddy

who ya gonna call?

eddie: okay i appreciate that we both got distracted by mike being awesome but. is it weird that we've never done any kind of video chat?

richie: well doesn't that stuff make you anxious?

eddie: i mean being logged into skype makes me anxious and the concept of the whole thing is a little stressful but if you wanted to, i would

richie: maybe not skype then? what about facetime?

eddie: that could work

richie: oh okay so like. now?

eddie: oh do you wanna do it tonight?

eddie: oh god i'm in my pyjamas

richie: oh wow true i've never seen your pyjamas

eddie: i'm very careful about what i take my selfies in

eddie: i just feel like my pyjamas are embarrassing. but i'm not actually sure

richie: i just wear an old t-shirt

eddie: i have a pyjama set. like a. two piece one.

richie: oh like old timey pyjamas?

eddie: they're not old timey they're just nice!

richie: eds i'm not gonna make fun of your pyjamas

richie: but we don't have to do it tonight unless you want to

eddie: i mean we could.

richie: you want me to call?

eddie: let me

[incoming call from Eds]

Richie is wearing an old t-shirt, and his face and the top of the shirt are all Eddie can see. "Right. Uh. Hey, Eds."

Eddie pauses for a moment, just watching Richie talk - talking to him, in real time. "Hi, Richie. You. Ah. Wow this is weird."

"Good weird?"

"Yeah. Yeah, I think it's good weird." Eddie can see every shift in Richie's expression - the way his brow furrowed out of concern, the way he's smiling with relief now. It's a little overwhelming.

"How do you look that good in pyjamas? How do you make it through the day like that?"

Eddie blushes. He knows Richie can't even see his silly matching pyjama set in full, but he knows he's being teased. He's embarrassed.

“You’re so dumb. You look fine, asshole.”

“Yeah me and my giant glasses.”

“There’s nothing actually wrong with your glasses, dumbass, they’re more hipstery than literal 1980s glasses.”

“You just like to make fun of me.”

“Well so do you, so we’re even.”

“True, I do enjoy making fun of myself.”

Eddie drops his head forward, then lifts it back up when he realizes that's probably bad facetime etiquette or something. “Rich, oh my god.”

Richie grins. “You know, uh. This is actually surprisingly not weird except that like your face is right there and that’s sort of distracting, but other than that. Like talking to you is just. Pretty much exactly the same.”

“You think it’ll be like this in person?”

“Yeah. Yeah I do.”

They're both quiet for a minute, and while Eddie has an excuse to look, he keeps looking, and finally sees a bruise right by Richie's curls where they fall over his forehead - it's partly hidden. "Oh my god, I just noticed that place on your forehead. You weren't kidding about the skee ball! Richie, god, you idiot. Stop hurting yourself." Eddie wants to reach out, brush his fingers over the spot, do something to help, but all he can do over video chat and all these fucking miles is stare and worry.

"Moment effectively ruined by my own dumbassery."

"I just. You're hurt and you're on the other side of the fucking country! I can't like make sure you don't have a concussion or anything."

"I promise I don't have a concussion, Eds."

"Can you promise you'll stop getting hurt doing stupid shit?"

"Well. Not really."

"Can you try?"

"...Alright. I'll do my best."

Silence again.

“Okay it does feel kind of weird when we’re just sitting here looking at each other.”

Eddie feels surprisingly not weird. Getting to do this just feels like real, concrete proof that Richie is real. Not that he thought he wasn't - just sometimes it's hard when they've never met. He decides to try and vocalize that. “It’s just that it’s. I don’t know. You’re real? Like you’re there on the other side of the screen, moving and stuff. Not to say I didn’t think you were real, just. You’re really real and I can see you react to things I say with like. Your face. It’s a lot to take in.”

“Why I say, my dear Edward, that’s simply preposterous-”

Eddie bursts into laughter and brings a hand up to his face. “Oh God, not the British guy voice.”

Richie's quiet until Eddie looks back up, and then it's clear that Richie's just sort of staring. Eddie blinks back at him.

“What, what is it?” he asks.

“Oh, uh. Nothing, I don’t know. I’ve just never heard you laugh before. Or seen you laugh.”

For once, Richie can actually see his expression, so Eddie tries to

school it into something more threatening - probably unsuccessfully. "If you tell anyone I laughed at one of your stupid voices I'll punch you directly in the face."

Richie smiles.

Eddie gives in and smiles back at him. Then, he has a realization. "Oh! Wow you're right I've never heard you laugh either. Oh god, does that mean I have to try and be funny? I'm absolutely going to crack under pressure."

Richie starts to chuckle, and Eddie's smile returns.

"Isn't it like 3 am for you? Go to bed, dipshit, stop trying to be funny."

"Richie Tozier telling me to stop being funny? Wow. How the tables have turned."

"How the turntables."

"God you're ridiculous."

"Always have been, almost certainly always will be."

There's another long pause. Eddie's starting to get tired, and he has an idea - he just has to ask Richie about it. It's harder than he thought. "...Rich?"

"Yeah? What is it?"

Eddie bites his lip, then takes a deep breath and actually gets the words out. "Do you think we could. Could I just set my phone down and you could. Stay on the line til I fall asleep? You can tell me a stupid story or whatever, practice your voices, I don't care, just. If you don't mind?"

Richie gives him a look that Eddie can only call fond - it's so soft that Eddie feels like he might break, which doesn't really make sense, except that he's never seen Richie make a face like that - never even imagined it. "Of course I can, Eds. I don't mind."

"...Thanks."

Notes for the Chapter:

okay so i accidentally lied the sort of angst starts next chapter. but i gotta keep you on your toes! anyways i hope everyone who watches it is enjoying/ has enjoyed stranger things!!! i just finished watching klasdfk

4. when good news is bad news

Summary for the Chapter:

mike has a really great idea that somehow goes horribly wrong

The Losers Squad TM

mike: hey guys so i have some news

bill: what is it mike?

ben: are you okay?

mike: yeah i'm actually really good. i have some good news. so. i've been saving up my money from working at the library and i get some of the money from working on the farm, right? and i think i have enough money that maybe i could. help one or two of you guys out if we all wanted to try and meet up. like everyone would all have to chip in a little but. if we wanted to plan something

bev: oh my god

bev: mike you're really the nicest person alive

richie: mike dude none of us would let you do that

mike: i wanna help! i think we should all try to meet up somewhere and if there's one of you that can't afford it at all there's no reason i shouldn't lend you some money and you can pay me back when we're all rich and famous, right?

eddie: but where would we meet up? and when?

bill: well winter break is probably the most logical time, right? not like christmas but before or after, once everyone's semester is over

mike: and i was sort of thinking maybe you guys could all come stay with me in maine. it's not really thrilling in derry but. i have a lot of room in the farmhouse so it'd be free to stay here.

eddie: oh. i could take a bus or a train up to maine and i have enough money saved up for that.

ben: i'd have to fly but i have some money, too, maybe enough to fly from texas

bill: i think i could do it

bev: mike you've lived in maine? this whole time?

mike: yeah?

bev: mike i live like two hours away from you

mike: oh shit you meant portland maine?

bev: YES

mike: okay well!!! holy shit that's great news

mike: where's stan?

bill: i'm pretty sure he has class right now

bill: oh do you mean where he lives? i think atlanta

mike: so that's probably doable

mike: richie?

richie: i don't think i can

eddie: money?

richie: yeah i mean i'm trying to save up but california to maine is sort of. really fucking expensive guys

eddie: i'll have extra money, and so does mike. we'll all chip in

richie: i don't want you guys to do that

eddie: you'd rather just sit at home in california while we all meet up than borrow some money from us and get to see us all?

richie: maybe

eddie: right. great.

mike: richie c'mon it's really not a big deal

richie: just lay off, okay?

stan: God what the hell did I miss in class?

bill: stan, hi! are you in for trying to meet up over break

stan: Oh wow

stan: I mean yeah I can, so why not I guess

stan: Richie don't be so stubborn we all wanna see you

stan: I've got money I could pitch in, too, the more of us that do the less any of us are actually contributing. If you toss in some of your money, too, it's not a big deal. You could probably even cover more than any one of us individually would put in so you're paying the most.

richie: i'll think about it

stan: Okay

bill: oh man I guess this means I should start looking at flights, this is crazy

bev: mike can I come up and visit before winter break?

mike: oh my god, bev, yeah! please do!

ben: take selfies you guys! that'll be so nice!

bev: i can't wait to meet your chickens mike

mike: they're pretty exciting

bill: i know i'm coming there really soon but i really want to meet you and your chickens mike

mike: well like you said it won't be long <3

ben: it's. really quiet without richie and eddie isn't it

stan: This is actually sort of terrible.

richie: i'm screenshotting that, stan, you can't take that back now

richie: what i can't leave you guys on your own for ten minutes?

mike: richie?

richie: yeah?

mike: hush.

richie: no it'd upset staniel too much, i'd better not

who ya gonna call?

richie: eds hey i forgot to ask how you slept last night

richie: eds?

richie: eddie are you really ignoring me

richie: shit

The Losers Squad TM

richie: i'm fully about to make an asshole of myself

stan: Aren't you always?

richie: can one of you guys just check on eddie?

bill: shouldn't you do that?

richie: he won't answer can one of you just do it please

bill: you know he can probably see this

richie: bill i don't give a shit just. can someone make sure he's okay

stan: He's in class. He says he's fine

stan: He's not coming though

stan: At winter break. He says he can't

bill: what?

stan: Something about his mom

bev: oh yeah. i guess that makes sense

ben: it's not gonna be the same without eddie

bill: yeah i agree. maybe once he's calmed down we can figure something out, yeah?

mike: one of us can talk to him later, yeah.

bill: right

who ya gonna call?

richie: why'd you answer stan?

richie: eds i was gonna talk to you later about trying to come it was just embarrassing in front of everyone and

richie: i'm sorry okay?

richie: fuck, never mind i guess

Notes for the Chapter:

sorry this chapter is so short i guess i just didn't want to prolong the suffering? also i'm posting early today bc i'm going out for halloween tonight! i'm being eddie for halloween because you know, It has just taken over my life. i hope if anyone else is going out for halloween tonight you have a good time! comment and maybe the boys will stop being idiots.

5. stan the man

Summary for the Chapter:

stan gets a boyfriend but also makes everyone really uncomfortable

The Losers Squad TM

richie: anybody else in this dead group chat ever just listen to the smiths for like three whole days

bev: i'm pretty sure spotify should have a check-in message for that like

bev: we notice you've been listening only to the cure and the smiths for three entire days, how are you still alive?

richie: you're not wrong, i'm pretty sure it's not helping at all

eddie: maybe you should try listening to something else

ben: eddie! hi!

eddie: hey guys

bill: eddie what happened with your mom?

eddie: oh well i just. nothing happened specifically but there's no way i can get out of going home for break, she'll lose her mind

eddie: i just got excited and caught up in the moment right because technically i should be able to come because i'm like an adult person

eddie: but she'll cry and she'll say things and i'll never hear the end of it, and then she'll try to get me to not go back to school anyways, she always does, every time i'm home she tries to tell me i don't need it

richie: you should just lie about when your break ends

richie: it's not like she'll check your school website. or even better tell her there's something on campus you have to get to

bill: richie has a point, we could do after christmas instead of before. do new year's together?

stan: That actually works even better for me, Hanukkah is before Christmas so I'll be free then

bill: none of us have booked anything yet, right?

eddie: i'm not sure

mike: you've got time to think it over eddie, especially since you're taking a bus or a train. there's no rush.

eddie: okay.

ben: how's everyone been the past couple of days?

stan: Dying slowly

richie: aren't we all

bev: lkasjdf mood

bill: i'm just tired, really. balancing school and work and taking care of georgie has been kind of hard lately

ben: is georgie gonna come with you over winter break?

bill: no i don't think so. i don't have the money. and since he's 13 now he can stay with some friends for a little while, most of his friends' parents know about everything with me and georgie and they're usually pretty good about it

bev: that's good

mike: yeah i'm glad there's people around you that can help out sometimes, bill

mike: that's the thing that makes me wish we all lived closer together more than anything, i wish i could help you out

bill: thanks mike <3

bill: and thanks all you guys you're sweet

stan: So should we get there around December 30th? That seems like the best way to spend New Year's together

mike: man new year's with you guys is gonna be so good

stan: I never do anything for New Year's, should be interesting

bev: i'm not kissing any of you just for the record

bev: maybe i'll kiss ben on the cheek because i trust him

ben: beverly i love you

bev: i love you too ben <3

stan: I'm really not kissing any of you

stan: You're all my friends but that's not happening

eddie: stan how are things going with that guy in your class? not kylo
ren guy i mean the cute guy in your english class

stan: Well i was gonna wait for a more appropriate time but uh

stan: I got a boyfriend

richie: so that's where you've been

bill: stan that's fantastic!

bev: stan i'm so proud

mike: stan the man!

richie: mike stop stealing my nickname gig

eddie: stan that's great <3

stan: Thanks guys

stan: I actually ran into him at the counseling center, like outside of class, and we started talking

stan: And that's when it all sort of happened. He really gets it. I'm really happy

ben: we're happy for you!

eddie: anybody else feel really single suddenly? no offense stan

bev: oh yeah mood

ben: yeah i wish things would work out that well with the guy in the library

stan: Eddie it's not like you're really single

eddie: what does that mean?

bill: stan

stan: You've got Richie it's not like you don't have anyone

bev: stan no

stan: Well somebody had to say something eventually

eddie: hey stan could you maybe shut the fuck up

richie: i'm gonna have to agree with eddie

mike: looks like it's time for me to go feed the sheep, bye guys!

bill: mike finding a swift exit is such a mood so I'm gonna go tie my shoes and leave my phone in another room

bev: i'm gonna go wash my hair

ben: gonna go to the library, bye!

stan: It's just stupid that no one ever says anything, it's not that hard

richie: stan really please stop

stan: Fine, whatever

who ya gonna call?

richie: you're probably never gonna talk to me again now, huh

eddie: what because of stan?

richie: oh

richie: well because of stan and because you were mad at me

eddie: it's more complicated than that richie

richie: you weren't mad at me?

eddie: i was sort of mad at you because you're an idiot

eddie: i don't wanna explain this right now i've barely slept the last couple of days

richie: are you coming to maine?

eddie: i'm gonna try

richie: it's sort of soon, isn't it?

eddie: yeah it's only a little over a month

richie: wow. shit. and then we'll all be in the same place

eddie: yeah all seven of us

richie: i'll try not to steal all your time you could be hanging out with like bill and everyone else

eddie: well we can both hang out with them you know

eddie: like both of us, together, with everyone else

richie: you know what i mean

eddie: i don't actually because you're being dumb

eddie: can we just. be serious for a second

richie: why?

eddie: rich

richie: okay. what is it?

eddie: i wasn't gonna go if you weren't going. it would have sucked and i would have been miserable even with everyone else there.

richie: well that's dumb, eds

eddie: i guess so but it's just true so i wanted to tell you, since you were being dumb

eddie: i should probably go to bed soon, i'm exhausted

richie: you don't want me to stay up?

eddie: no. not really

richie: oh. okay

eddie: goodnight rich

richie: night, eds

Notes for the Chapter:

sorry this one is sort of short again lksajdf i promise
chapter 6 makes up for it!

6. hey there demons

Summary for the Chapter:

a new episode of buzzfeed unsolved really brings the group together again

The Losers Squad TM

bill: winter break is a lot sooner than i realized. it's possible i'm panicking a little

eddie: i only know panic

bill: we should probably start booking stuff

bill: stan you said the 30th made sense right?

mike: new year's eve is the 31st so that'd give you guys time to get settled in and then celebrate. if you wanted to get here a day or two earlier you could. depends on everyone's schedules i guess

stan: That seems the most logical to me

richie: alright spock

stan: I'm taking that as a compliment, Spock is a gay icon

eddie: he's right

richie: what can i say, i'm just really not at my best lately

ben: i still think that was pretty funny richie, it just wasn't an insult

richie: well i didn't mean it as an insult. so there

eddie: oh shit guys there's a new episode of buzzfeed unsolved tonight

stan: Oh thank god I've earned this

mike: nice!

bev: my boys return

richie: bevjamin aren't we your boys?

bev: can't i have several boys?

richie: fair enough

who ya gonna call?

richie: so we're gonna rabbit the new episode tonight right? you're not gonna watch it without me?

eddie: richard what do you take me for of course we'll watch it together

richie: okay good i just wanted to check

richie: you know there's this other thing i found that's kind of like rabbit but you can watch stuff over video chat i think you can do youtube videos. would you wanna do that?

eddie: yeah okay :)

richie: i can't see that smiley as anything but passive aggressive

eddie: well my shitty unupdated phone doesn't do emojis right okay i don't know what you want from me

richie: if you broke your phone your mother would buy you a new one immediately

eddie: yeah and she'd erase all my contacts, too

eddie: all she ever talks about is how dangerous it is that i talk to you guys

eddie: richie my mom thinks the internet made me gay

richie: yeah i know

richie: i'm sorry

eddie: well. i will continue to accept your apologies

eddie: but i'm sorry too. for ignoring you. that was dumb and weird and i shouldn't have done it, i was just freaking out. as i'm prone to

eddie: i have like a thing but i don't wanna tell you

eddie: i'll probably tell you in maine. so you should come

richie: yeah i'm coming

richie: you're not gonna get to have all the fun without me

eddie: there would be no fun without you

eddie: again if you screenshot that i will literally kill you

richie: promises, promises

eddie: oh shut up. when's the new episode come out?

richie: it's another hour

eddie: you wanna just watch other dumb youtube videos til it starts?

richie: absolutely yes 100%, i'll set it up

eddie: i'm already telling you, you only get to pick every other video, and no ten hours of anything. we're not doing that again

richie: but eds :^(

eddie: your sad faces won't work on me richie tozier, not after last time

The Losers Squad TM

eddie: hey there demons

eddie: you guys watch the new episode yet rich and i just finished :0

bill: you guys watch it together?

richie: billiam are you forgetting that eds and i have matching "hey ghouls the boys are here" shirts and that we coordinate when we wear them?

richie: also sometimes we're so in sync we accidentally wear them on the same day

eddie: he's not wrong

bev: wow true love

bev: find someone that looks at you the way richie and eddie look at

each other

eddie: or the way richie looks at ryan bergara

richie: i'm not ashamed

richie: eddie's in love with shane madej he told me so

eddie: you say that like i'm supposed to be ashamed, i'm not either

eddie: i was only saying that because i literally watched you look at him this time and the look on your face was ridiculous

mike: this is the funniest conversation i've ever read

ben: it is a little on the nose isn't it

bill: wait did you guys do video chat?

eddie: oh. yeah we have a couple of times now, we figured it out

mike: we're all very proud

stan: See Bill it was good that we shamed them

eddie: i didn't say that and i never would

richie: staniel stop the bullying

bev: to be fair most of stan's presence in this group chat is purpose number one aka giving you shit, richie

richie: i hate this fucking family

richie: and yet i'm supposed to spend new year's with you guys. why

mike: you're coming then richie?

richie: yeah i guess so, eds talked me into it

eddie: first of all don't call me that, second of all i barely did any talking you just knew you were being silly

richie: yeah alright, fair enough

ben: so everyone's coming?

bill: it looks like it!

bill: wow guys this is gonna be awesome

ben: all seven of us in one place!

stan: Someone's gonna end up dead

mike: stan you're definitely exaggerating

stan: Am I?

eddie: we're not letting you kill richie, stan

richie: eddie spaghetti, my knight in shining armor :))

eddie: i'm not letting stan kill you because i'm gonna kill you myself

richie: if only you'd ever follow through

mike: no one's killing anyone on my farm, there are plenty of other places in derry to hide the body and i don't want that on me

stan: Alright Mike, I'll do it for you

mike: i appreciate that stan

richie: micycle that's no fun

richie: where's my dear friend who pushed a guy down a well

mike: planning very quietly to push you down a well if you don't stop calling me micycle

richie: fair

richie: how about michaelmas

mike: it's time for me to go

ben: bye mike!

who ya gonna call?

richie: so now that we're actually talking again and stuff do you wanna talk about the fact that you were having so much trouble sleeping?

eddie: can i be just. really honest with you

richie: yeah eds of course you can

eddie: okay i don't want this to be. weird or anything just. i listen to your voice messages to fall asleep most of the time because it seems like it helps. like it distracts me enough that i can fall asleep. i still have nightmares sometimes, it's not fucking magic, but your dumb messages help me fall asleep

eddie: but i was upset so i felt weird listening to your voice messages and i didn't wanna ask you for new ones and so it made everything worse because i couldn't do what i always do and it made me extra stressed out

richie: oh

richie: i don't think that's. weird. i mean maybe it's weird? but it's not bad

richie: it's fine

eddie: so it doesn't bother you?

richie: no not at all

richie: i'm glad i can help

eddie: well you do

eddie: and then when all that dumb stuff happened i was just having this crisis that like. you'd decided you didn't wanna come after you saw me and heard me talk and stuff and i knew it was stupid and that if i just talked to you that you'd clear everything up but part of me was still scared that it wouldn't clear everything up so i couldn't talk to you and it was just one big terrible cycle

richie: oh eds

richie: no that's not it at all

eddie: well no i know that now idiot because you're coming

richie: it really was the money thing. i hate. having to have you guys do anything else for me. i already know i'm like an annoying piece of shit and i'm lucky you guys put up with me at all if you give me money that's just like. i'm twice the burden i already was

[Incoming call from Eds]

“Eds. Hey. You’re calling me on the phone? What is this, the 90s?”

“No I just wanted to. Well I was gonna do video but I look like shit so you’re just gonna have to deal with the over the phone method but oh my god you’re so dumb! Stop being dumb! I needed you to hear me say this so you know that I mean it. You are my favorite person in the entire world, you mean a lot to me, you’re never a burden, I do not put up with you, I love you. So stop being an asshole.”

“...Oh. Uh. I love you, too, Eds. Thanks.”

“Yeah, well. You’re welcome. Dipshit. If you ever need me to literally shout at you about how good and important you are, I’m available to do that at any time of day or night.”

“Right, that’s good to know. Thanks.”

“I can hear that you’re smiling. I think talking on the phone is underrated.”

“That’s like the gayest thing you’ve ever said.”

“Oh my god, Richie, shut up.”

“As you know, I never do.”

“No. Good. And oh my god, you can’t screenshot any of this, I can say whatever I want.”

“Does that mean you’re gonna be nice to me?”

“I’m always nice to you when it’s just the two of us talking. Except when you’re being an idiot.”

“And just now I was being an idiot and you called to yell that you love me.”

“Well I do. Even though you’re stupid.”

“I’ll take that.”

“...Will you stay on the phone with me until I fall asleep again? That. Worked really well the other time. I didn’t get to tell you. But it did.”

“Yeah. Of course.”

Notes for the Chapter:

hope you guys enjoyed this chapter!! just for the record i also posted another reddie fic last night, a halloween oneshot, so if you wanna go check that

out please do! it has gays and graveyards and david bowie music if that's your kind of scene. there also should be another halloween fic coming too, hopefully, tonight or tomorrow. anyways let me know what you thought of this chapter! we're over halfway through now :0

7. [image of bev holding a chicken]

Summary for the Chapter:

a meeting happens, derry is probably cursed, what else is new

The Losers Squad TM

mike: hey so guess who i found

mike: [image of Bev holding a chicken]

ben: you guys!!!

richie: holy shit!

eddie: i demand a selfie of both of you together

mike: i can meet that demand

mike: [image of Mike and Bev]

ben: ahhhhh!!!!

bill: this is the best thing that's happened all week

bev: i decided to drive up for the weekend it was sort of short notice, but mike is the best

bev: also this place is awesome, you guys. well not the town really it's kind of shitty, but mike's grandfather knows so much about the history and mike took me out to the ruins of this old factory and it was crazy

bev: they could shoot a hell of an episode of buzzfeed unsolved up here

mike: grandad always says this place is cursed, and i'd believe him

richie: i for one am stoked to come to your cursed hometown for new year's

richie: gonna get FUCKED UP by demons! can't wait

eddie: you're such an idiot

eddie: curses and demons are totally different, i don't even believe in any of that stuff and i know that

eddie: you're supposed to like give a shit about ghosts

richie: some of my best friends are ghosts

stan: Does that mean we're finally free?

richie: i said some of, you guys are still my best living friends

eddie: if you don't prefer me to your ghost friends i'm gonna get a refund on my train ticket immediately

richie: eddie :^(

eddie: that is so not an answer

richie: of course you're my favorite

stan: I hope you guys are having fun, Mike and Bev

bev: i really am

mike: yeah it's been really great, i'm so stoked to have all you guys here

bev: there's definitely enough room for everyone, and we could hang up some lights in the barn and go out there the night of new year's eve

mike: that's a really good idea, bev

bill: it just keeps hitting me that this is actually happening and we're all finally gonna be in the same place

ben: me too! i'm so excited to actually hang out with everyone in person, and we can watch movies and stuff

bev: also richie there's an arcade in derry and i'm gonna kick your ass at street fighter

richie: oh you're fucking on, beverly

stan: I hope we're all invited to watch because I wouldn't miss this for the world

bill: the losers go to the arcade, a snapchat story in 87 parts

eddie: i'll be glad to document that

eddie: god this is gonna be so much fun

eddie: i love you guys

ben: we love you too eddie! i'm so excited

bill: i think we're all excited

bill: it's also less than a month away at this point

richie: fuck i gotta book my plane ticket

stan: Let's all do that right now, yeah?

bill: yeah will do, let's all book stuff. mike and bev excluded obviously. and eddie you said you already had your ticket?

eddie: i do!

ben: i went ahead and got mine too

bill: time for all of us to get our shit together then

who ya gonna call?

eddie: hey tell me when your flight gets in once you book it

richie: why? you gonna pick me up from the airport?

eddie: well. i was gonna take an uber from the train station. are you flying into portland?

richie: yeah. when does your train get there?

eddie: like 11:00 am on the 30th because train schedules are evil

richie: oh shit yeah, my flight gets there at like 3 pm on the 30th

eddie: well i can find ways to fuck around. i just. thought it'd be good for you to have help at the airport

eddie: and i wanted to see you before we see everyone else

richie: do you know when anyone else is getting in?

eddie: no

richie: me neither. but if i don't volunteer anything then maybe you and i can still meet up first

eddie: yeah. okay, good

richie: i'm gonna hug the shit out of you

richie: if that's cool

eddie: i think i would probably actually be really angry if you didn't

richie: right good

richie: you wanna watch something? or video chat? or we can do voice messages?

eddie: i mean sure, any of them are fine. why?

richie: i just miss you. which is dumb because we're literally talking but

eddie: no i get it. it's like the closer it is the further away, too. like it's so close but we're still not in the same place, i get that.

eddie: what would you rather do?

richie: video? cause last time we were watching buzzfeed unsolved i haven't seen you just talk in a while

eddie: okay sure

[Incoming call from Eds]

“Hey Eds.” Richie's wearing the same old t-shirt as pyjamas that he had on last time. The phone is a little closer to his face this time, and Eddie can see his freckles, and how worn the collar on his shirt is. He tries not to stare, but facetimeing sort of means looking at each other, so he at least tries to make sure he isn't being creepy.

“Hey Rich. I don't know that I actually have anything that exciting to tell you.”

Richie shakes his head. “That's fine. I just wanted to see you. And you can't screenshot that either.”

There's something about the simple nature of the compliment that gets Eddie flustered, but he doesn't quite blush. “I don't need to screenshot every time you compliment me, you do it like all the time

when you're being stupid."

"I resent the fact that you consider that me being stupid, that's as serious as I ever get," Richie says, but he's grinning.

Eddie sighs. "God, stop it. Let's talk about literally anything else. Oh! I actually do have a story I can tell from while we weren't talking, do you want me to?"

"Fire away, Eds."

"Ugh. Fine, okay, so--"

"You never correct me anymore when it's just us talking. Do you know that?"

This time, Eddie does blush. It's not like he was unaware - he was hoping Richie wasn't paying that much attention. "Shut up. Yes, I know, I just. Gave up. Can I tell the story please?"

"Please do."

Eddie adjusts how he's sitting, getting upright on his bed again, with the phone right in front of his face. "Right. So I was in math the other day - you know the class where I have the giant lecture and then the lab?"

“Yeah, I remember you saying that.”

“Well it was in lecture, not lab. Which is too early in the morning and besides it’s in a giant fucking auditorium, so it’s the one class I’ve actually skipped because it’s not like anyone can tell. All the homework is online, all the tests are in the lab, so going isn’t really necessary. But the other morning, I did actually decide to go, because there was something I was having trouble understanding, and for whatever reason I thought going to lecture might help. In a normal class, that might be right, but my math professor is actually just fucking crazy - and I now officially have evidence to prove it! I say that because there I was, in class. I sat on the upper level of the auditorium, because I was a little late and you can sort of sneak in that way. The guy’s lecturing, droning on, and I see one of the guys downstairs leave. People leave class early, you know, it happens. Only the professor stops lecturing - maybe he said something, I don’t remember - and then he throws a piece of chalk full force at the guy leaving, and it hits the back wall of the fucking auditorium and shatters. I couldn’t see it hit, but I heard it and saw him throw it, and then he said something about how much he hates it when people leave early and it’s disrespectful, so. Yeah. Officially crazy. And not like me crazy, like he threw something full force at one of his students, that seems like maybe you should get fired over that crazy.”

Richie laughs. “Are you serious? That’s fucking awesome, I wish I had a crazy professor that threw shit at people. Where do I sign up?”

“Aren’t you supposed to be some kind of media or film or acting major? Why the hell do you wanna take my math class?”

He shrugs. “I mean, I don’t, but when is my eccentric professor gonna

come along?”

“I’m sure you’ll find them someday, Rich.”

“We can hope.”

“Anything interesting happen to you while I was being dumb?”

“Ah, no not really. Oh! Well I did get one of those jobs, so I’m saving up and stuff. It’s a job at a theater. I guess all of that’s gonna go to Maine now instead of just us hanging out in New York, you know, but that’s still good.”

“We’ll still hang out. And like I said there’s. A thing I might have to tell you.” Eddie bites his lip after he speaks, almost wishing he could take the words back that way.

“You’re killin’ me with this, Eds. You’re not even gonna give me a hint?”

“No, I don’t wanna jinx it, I still haven’t heard back for sure yet.”

“So it’s some kind of news?”

Eddie throws up his free hand and tries to get it on camera. “Okay!

That's enough! No guessing either, asshole. Let's stop really talking anyways, I should probably try and fall asleep, so I'm gonna put the phone down. We can still sort of. Chat, you know, like always, or you can talk at me until I fall asleep."

"You're just gonna assume I'll stay up now?"

Eddie freezes, and blinks at Richie's expression - which looks surprisingly serious, and oh god, is he serious? "...Do you not want to? I mean you don't have to, obviously-"

Richie cracks, and smiles. "Eds, shit, come on, I was kidding. Of course I will. Of course."

"Don't be an asshole."

"I'm always an asshole."

Rolling his eyes, Eddie smiles a little. "You are not always an asshole. Stop bickering with me and do something soothing so I can get some rest. Also if you wake me up on accident again by singing Lana Del Ray in your Donald Duck voice, I will kill you in the Portland airport."

"Alright, Eds."

Notes for the Chapter:

we're approaching the end guys!! mostly by which i

mean next chapter is actually the last text format chapter! so it's very nearly time for everyone to meet :) anyways there should be another halloween fic coming later today (fingers crossed) and in the mean time i hope you guys enjoy this chapter! sorry it's not very halloween-y. also fun fact: eddie's story about the professor 100% actually happened to me my freshman year of college, i just pulled it from life.

8. the power of gay love and friendship

Summary for the Chapter:

some things happen, some other things are resolved

who ya gonna call?

eddie: rich i had this dream i have to tell you

richie: eds it's so early

eddie: i know for a fact that you always keep your phone on silent so i did not wake you up

richie: no i was up for work but eddie i'm so goddamn tired

eddie: maybe this'll make your morning better

eddie: i had this dream that me and you and all the other losers were friends when we were kids and we all grew up together, and we were all hanging out and we built a dam? like we dammed up a small river and then we were all like running around together it was fun

richie: sounds like you've been watching too many 80s movies, like. the goonies

eddie: yeah i guess it was sort of like that. i'm just glad it wasn't like. we all went to summer camp together and then got murdered or something

richie: well yeah, i'm glad it was nice for once

richie: that does sound nice actually. all of us growing up together

eddie: i doubt my mom would have let me hang out with you guys anyways

eddie: anyways we all do finally get to hang out like. soon. really soon.

richie: just a couple of weeks now right?

eddie: yeah

eddie: and then i'm gonna meet you. at an airport.

richie: too bad we can't film it to make one of those sappy tumblr videos

eddie: i don't really want other people to see it

richie: you raise a good point

richie: shit sorry eds i gotta go or i'll be late for work

richie: talk to you later <3

eddie: bye rich

The Losers Squad TM

bev: oh my god guys i have a story

bev: i'm gonna send a voice message

bev: [1:12] *So after I got back from hanging out with Mike I had this big project due, right. And I kept trying and trying to make myself do it but finally last night it was the night before it was due and I'd barely started, so I made the trek to the library, since the library here is open 24 hours during the week and I can always force myself to do work there. Well I go to the second floor, and there's this girl from my class - one of my design classes. She's really cool, she's got this dyed blue hair and she's really cute and I kind of knew she like, wasn't straight, she's got a little pin she wears sometimes. So I decided to stop and talk to her, like this is the moment, right? She said hey and I said hey and we were both working on the project, but we also sat there talking, and we were there talking and working until four in the morning. We talked about all kinds of stuff. I*

told her about the songs I write and then when I was leaving, she asked for my number, so I think. I mean I don't know if I'm gonna end up in a girl punk band or with a girlfriend or both, but I'm really excited, I'm going over to her place to jam sometime soon, you guys she's so cute and funny and we're so similar in really important ways.

ben: bev i'm pretty sure this is the purest voice message that has ever graced this chat

ben: i feel blessed

richie: i'm even feeling a little touched

eddie: this sounds so like the cutest gay movie ever, i would absolutely watch it, 10/10

bill: bev what's her name?

bev: leah!

eddie: oh my god the same name as your stardew valley wife, it's destiny

bev: oh my god you're right

bev: i've found her, the girl of my dreams

stan: This is the best conversation I've ever come back to

stan: I'm so happy for you Bev!

mike: i feel like i'm gonna end up the one single guy here, where's my cute boyfriend

bill: well i'm coming to maine

richie: bill holy shit

stan: Oh my god are you guys really gonna do this in the group chat

eddie: is this really happening

mike: bill do you think maybe we should talk somewhere else

bill: we can, yes

ben: you know i had an idea but those two are so subtle

bev: well comparatively, yes

eddie: compared to who?

bev: i'm gonna go hunt down the love of my life again

eddie: i hate you guys

ben: well now i'm gonna be the only single one after maine

eddie: ignoring the implications of that, ben what happened to that guy at your work?

ben: oh you mean the guy at the library

ben: that would. involve talking to him

richie: ben you're adorable, but i do think you'll need words beyond your sheer magnetism to get this dude's attention

ben: i know! i know i just. it's hard

bev: you could write him a poem?

ben: oh bev you came back

bev: that one you wrote for me that time was so pretty ben

bev: you're really good at poetry

ben: thank you for reminding me of that time i had a massive unsuccessful crush on you

bev: it was sweet <3 it's not your fault i'm a huge lesbian

bev: plus you were never creepy or weird and you chilled out and got over me, that's why i trust and love you

ben: i'm really glad we're friends bev

richie: this group chat is getting way too sweet today i refuse to go back to the dentist

eddie: god richie you're such a loser

richie: i mean that literally is the name of our group chat, yes

eddie: that's the joke dipshit

richie: i know you're smiling

bev: just keeps getting sappier and gayer around here huh

bev: seriously though ben, i think you should write him a poem or something, do something cute. give it a shot

ben: okay bev <3 i will for you

who ya gonna call?

richie: eds should we talk

eddie: you mean about what everyone else is always saying

richie: i don't really know what to say

eddie: can i go

richie: sure

eddie: i just think that new york and california is too far apart

eddie: i figured maybe when we were in maine we could. talk

richie: and after maine?

eddie: don't worry

eddie: i'm not saying it's a what happens in maine stays in maine thing asshole

eddie: i'm just saying

eddie: oh god now you're making me anxious we're saying the same thing right

richie: what are you saying

eddie: rich please oh my god one of us is actually gonna have to say something

richie: you wanted to start!

eddie: well then i was stricken by panic

richie: i don't know how to say it

eddie: okay fine

eddie: richie i really like you i think i've probably had a crush on you since the first time we really talked over tumblr messages definitely since the time i spent an entire night watching all your dumb videos which is maybe creepy but hopefully it's cute in retrospect?

eddie: please don't hate me

richie: eds i could never hate you

eddie: i actually love it when you call me that and if you screenshot that i will absolutely 100% kill you

richie: too late

eddie: well get ready to be murdered in maine i guess

richie: should i go now

eddie: please?

richie: i think i'm sort of. fucking in love with you eds

eddie: oh

eddie: yeah that works

eddie: yeah

eddie: me too

eddie: i'm still kind of nervous you're going to somehow hate me in person

richie: are you serious i'm terrified

eddie: i'm not gonna hate you there's no way you can be more obnoxious in person

richie: you wanna bet

eddie: i love you

richie: yeah i love you, too eds

eddie: does this mean we should. kiss at the airport

richie: do you wanna have your first kiss in an airport?

eddie: oh god good point

eddie: but like. when.

richie: we'll figure it out

eddie: should we like tell everyone

richie: it's not like they don't know

eddie: oh god i guess ben really is the only single one now

richie: oh

richie: eddie kaspbrak does this make you my boyfriend

eddie: i guess it does doesn't it

richie: holy shit

richie: after all this time

eddie: oh hush it's not like you did anything either

eddie: boyfriend

richie: i am so ready to be the worst kind of couple with you we're gonna annoy the shit out of everyone in maine

eddie: you were already going to anyways

richie: eddie baby please

eddie: oh god

eddie: oh my god you like meant all that stuff this is really hitting me now

eddie: you really think i'm cute

richie: eds you are the handsomest boy i've ever seen in my entire life

eddie: oh my god stop this is so much worse now

richie: you're gonna learn to take a compliment eddie kaspbrak

eddie: i mean i guess if it involves you showering me with praise i can probably take it

eddie: i think i'm too embarrassed to do a video chat tonight. and we're seeing each other in like a couple of weeks anyways.

eddie: can i call you? just on the phone?

richie: fire away

[Incoming call from Eds]

“Hey, Rich.”

“Hey, boyfriend.”

“Oh my god Richie please.”

“That’s so cute, I can practically hear you blushing.”

“This is worse than I thought, you’re intolerable.”

“I can definitely hear you smiling.”

“Oh my god I’m gonna see you. In a week. You’re gonna be. Real and right there and directly in front of me and not an entire literal country away.”

“I’m gonna just hug you for the entire week we’re in Maine I hope that’s cool.”

“I think probably I’m gonna never let go of you so that’s fine.”

“I think. I think maybe it was a good idea, not wanting to deal with the distance thing. But what about when we get back from Maine?”

“Rich, I promise. Just wait and I... have a plan. And then hopefully you won't break up with me immediately.”

“I'm absolutely not breaking up with you.”

“We'll see. If you think I'm crazy then we'll just see.”

“I know you're crazy.”

“...Okay fair we're both crazy.”

“I really wanna tell the groupchat I have a boyfriend.”

“Everybody would flip shit and you know it.”

“Can we do that really quick. Please?”

“Okay, okay, fine. I actually. Maybe after you hang up and do that we could switch to video chat? I sort of miss your face.”

“Wow that's gay.”

“We’re literally dating now, loser.”

“Yeah we are! You’re stuck with me.”

“God, yes, I am. Now hang up and go tell everyone so we can video chat.”

“Alright, alright. Bye for like. A minute.”

The Losers Squad TM

richie: hey losers guess who finally has a boyfriend

eddie: it’s both of us don’t try to fool them asshole

bev: oh my god seriously you guys finally did it

richie: we’ve exchanged our confessions of undying love, yes

richie: and now eddie is my boyfriend and he can’t get rid of me

eddie: you’re so dumb

mike: thank god

bill: agreed

stan: Why now?

eddie: i don't know it was half bill and mike and half the fact that we're finally gonna see each other in person i think

richie: yeah agreed

ben: i'm so happy for you guys!

ben: but i'm now officially the only single one and that's really dumb

eddie: ben you should absolutely ask out that guy this week it's the only way

eddie: get his number before you leave for break!

richie: we believe in you buddy

ben: okay well. except i already have his number

bev: WHAT

bev: ben!!!

ben: i only have it for like! well he asked for mine a while ago for like a work thing

mike: was it an absolutely necessary work thing

ben: well. no

stan: Ben please text him

richie: ben really get yourself a boyfriend it comes so highly recommended

ben: okay!! okay i'll text him i guess it's not too late

bill: i'm on the edge of my seat

bill: this is better than any comic i have ever written

ben: okay um. i asked him out for coffee

bev: and????

ben: and he asked if it was a date

ben: and now i said yes

ben: oh

ben: he said he's been waiting for me to text him

ben: he said yes

richie: YES!

eddie: and just like that, in the span of like a day, none of us are single

mike: to be fair i think at least four of us just had to stop being idiots

ben: i think i can count, too, i think that can be five

ben: i just really thought he'd never like me for. various reasons

bev: but you were wrong! see! you're adorable and you're wonderful
and i'm glad someone else knows

richie: on that note guys, eddie and i have a facetime date to get to

bill: moving fast there huh

eddie: you guys are still the worst, goodnight

ben: goodnight!

ben: thanks again guys <3

who ya gonna call?

richie: you ready?

eddie: yeah i'll call just give me a second

[Incoming call from Eds]

Richie's grinning when he answers - Eddie's helpless to do anything but grin back. "Hey."

"Hey, Eds."

"It's kind of nice being allowed to stare." Eddie's lying on his bed with his head propped up on his free hand, so he really can put all his attention on his phone.

"There's gonna be a lot of staring in Maine, I hope everyone else is prepared for that."

"You think I'll throw you off your arcade game?"

"You'll have to stand behind me or I'll never be able to focus."

Eddie smiles and bites his lip. "That's cute."

"You're cute."

"You're ridiculous. I stand by that."

"Only for you, babe," Richie replies, winking, which makes Eddie far more fluttery than it has any right to.

He blushes in response to the compliment and the wink, somehow, even though he feels like he hasn't stopped blushing for an hour. At least this time Richie's blushing, too. "Oh my god. You're really such a loser, I can't believe what a sap you are."

"I really don't think it should be that much of a surprise."

"I guess it's not. I guess I just... I don't know. I always had to tell myself it was a joke or something or that you were just. Like that. I mean you know how internet flirting can get, right? People do that stuff all the time and don't mean it. But knowing you do it's just. I mean it's good but... I guess I just get why everyone made fun of us now."

Richie laughs at him, but not unkindly. Really, he's laughing at both of them. "It's possible we were both being complete dumbasses. But at least we finally got our shit together."

"Yeah. Yeah we did."

Eddie watches Richie's brow furrow with concern, even as his expression is still soft and affectionate. It's all a little much to take. "It's been a pretty eventful day. You look tired, Eds. Should you be going to sleep?"

“It’s only like 2 here right now,” Eddie says, but it turns into a yawn.

“Are you forgetting I can see you? You just yawned. It was very cute, but also you should try and get some sleep. We can talk whenever.”

Eddie starts adjusting, laying down on his side and still keeping the phone where he can see Richie and smile at him. “I’m gonna see you in like two weeks. In person. Like your face. Directly in front of my face.”

“That’s really gay, Eds.”

“You’re really gay.”

“Well, yeah, especially right now, I’m extremely gay for you.”

Enjoying their silly back and forth, and reluctant to stop looking at Richie, Eddie keeps holding his phone and stays quiet for a minute or two, just looking. Then he realizes how close he is to falling asleep. “Right, okay, I’m gonna put the phone down, you’re right. It’s been a long day. Love you, Rich. You can keep talking if you want.”

“Love you, too. Get some sleep, Eds.”

Notes for the Chapter:

well this is like super long but it's also the chat style

finale so ! that's the last we'll see of full chapters of text format, and the next chapter is the meeting!!!! i hope you guys enjoyed this chapter and i hope you'll enjoy the next one too <3

9. panic! in the airport

Summary for the Chapter:

the losers club, finally all in one place

Waiting in the Portland airport is the most nerve-wracking thing that Eddie has ever done. Probably. Well except maybe breaking news about being gay or getting into college to his mom, that had been pretty hard, too. Still. Richie, in person. In the airport. Eddie can't stay still. Even his train ride this morning, though stressful, doesn't compare to this. He keeps shifting on his feet, pulling out his phone, putting it back in his pocket, then standing on his tiptoes to look around, then nudging at his duffle bag where it's down by his feet. He isn't even that short, but somehow he feels like he might miss Richie - even though Richie had said he was a full six feet tall.

Looking back at his phone is an exercise in futility, but he keeps doing it anyways.

who ya gonna call?

eddie: i'm here when your plane lands! i'm down by the baggage claim, i got impatient.

Phone, airport. Phone, airport. Technically Richie's plane was supposed to have landed, so he could be texting any minute now. Eddie feels a little like his heart might explode, just because it hasn't slowed down since he stepped into the Portland airport. His chest is hurting a little at this point.

His phone dings, and he jumps.

richie: eds oh my god

richie: my plane just landed. once i can find my way down there, i'll be there

eddie: holy shit

eddie: okay i'm by your baggage claim, it's baggage claim b

Eddie thought he couldn't get any more nervous. Now he is. He starts bouncing a little on his tiptoes, looking at all the escalators down into the baggage claim area. Seconds are starting to feel like minutes, and minutes kind of more like an hour.

Richie probably just stopped to use the bathroom after he got off the plane, but Eddie feels like he might die before Richie even gets downstairs at this point.

Then he sees a pair of Vans and ripped jeans at the top of the visible part of the escalator. Long legs. Someone who's the right height. There's some kind of shitty vintage t-shirt on top, and then Richie's face. It's the escalator closest to him. Eddie is aware that he's trembling, and he looks over, stares, and waits for Richie to notice him.

Finally, he looks over, and his face lights up.

Richie Tozier, who of course has no sense of dignity or manners in an airport, screams “Eds!” at the absolute top of his lungs, and yanks his suitcase down the rest of the escalator, and then he’s practically running right at Eddie, and then Eddie’s running, too, and they collide right by the escalator, and Richie’s arms are around him, and Eddie has his face pressed against Richie’s shoulder.

“Eds, holy shit, you’re real.”

“Shut up, of course I’m real.”

“Oh my god you sound just the same.”

Eddie laughs, and he tightens his own arms around Richie’s waist, and he realizes he may be crying, just a little. He can feel Richie breathing, feel his ribs just a little, and he smells like some kind of shitty cologne - except actually it’s perfect, because it’s how Richie smells, and Eddie hadn’t even considered that, that that’s a thing he gets to know now. How his boyfriend smells.

“I love you, you idiot,” Eddie says.

Richie kisses the top of his head, Eddie can feel it, and he says “I love you, too, Eds.”

They stand there for at least another thirty seconds, just holding each other. In an airport. It doesn't matter. Eddie doesn't give a shit. This moment is the happiest he's been in years.

Eventually, he pulls back, but only because he wants to see Richie's face.

Surprisingly, Richie looks a little teary, too. He laughs, and wipes at his eyes under his glasses. Eddie reaches up and touches his face, wipes at it for him.

"Hey, Rich."

"Hey. Wow. Your freckles are really cute in person."

"Oh my god, shut up."

Eddie blushes, and Richie grins and brushes his fingers over Eddie's cheek. "God, wow. Okay. Should we maybe try to get out of this airport? I mean don't get me wrong, I'm holding your hand all the way out of here, I'm not letting go of you, but. Let's go somewhere else, yeah?"

"Yeah."

Even though he doesn't want to, Eddie pulls back, and Richie takes his hand just like he said he would. Richie has big hands - not that

Eddie has small ones, just that Richie's are still bigger. It's nice. Eddie picks up his duffle bag and puts it back on his shoulder, and they start walking.

They walk close enough that their shoulders brush and bump, and Eddie leads them to the parking garage, where they can get an Uber or a taxi.

"Do you think Uber goes to Derry?" Richie asks.

Eddie laughs. "God, I actually have no fucking clue. Should we text Mike?"

"Yeah, I can." Richie lets go of his suitcase to pull out his phone and text Mike one-handed. Eddie looks down at the phone in his own hand, and smiles as he watches the notifications come up. It's really Richie here beside him - the same old Richie, same dumb jokes and voices, same stupid texts. Eddie shuffles over enough that he can lean his head against Richie's shoulder while they're standing in place.

The Losers Squad TM

richie: hey michaelmas should we be getting an uber from the airport or should we take a taxi

mike: take a taxi, uber's not worth shit in derry

bill: who's we?

richie: eds met me at the airport so we're riding in together

ben: that's so cute!! how was it?

richie: pretty perfect

richie: eds just laughed at me but it's true

Eddie bumps his head against Richie's arm. "I'm not laughing at you, asshole. I'm just... overwhelmed. I love you."

Richie turns and looks at him, and just sort of stares, and Eddie thinks for a moment that they might - but they're still in an airport parking garage, so Richie just smiles. "I love you, too."

When a taxi finally pulls up, they put their luggage in the back and then get in and give the driver Mike's address in Derry.

Eddie knows he should be nervous or something about what the driver will think, but he leans against Richie's shoulder anyways, and Richie puts an arm around him, and it's still perfect.

"Are you nervous about meeting everyone else?" Eddie asks.

Richie shrugs, and it jostles Eddie a little. “Not as nervous as I was about meeting you. But here you are, and this worked out, so.”

“Unless you get sick of me by the end of the week.”

“That’s absolutely my line, Eds. Stop stealing my lines.”

“Not if it’ll stop you from being dumb.”

They stay cuddled up like that, in the back of the taxi. They have things to talk about - and they’ll still need to find time to kiss - but Eddie’s content to wait on all that, and just to enjoy actually touching Richie and being in the same space as him.

“So do you know who’s there yet?” Eddie asks.

“It seemed like maybe Bill was there. And it’d make sense if Bev was. I don’t know about Ben or Stan. Both of them were flying in, too. I think Bill got here early.”

“That’d make sense. If we were all meeting up at your place I’d have gotten there early. Then again, I’d also probably just never leave.”

“You’re welcome on my couch anytime, babe.”

Eddie bites his lip, bites back some of the things he wants to say. "I have to sleep on the couch?"

"Well. Maybe not."

Eddie laughs, and he gets to *feel* Richie laugh, and then after another long, comfortable silence, they've made it to Derry.

It feels strange that Richie's been so quiet, but they're comfortable with each other. Maybe it's from all the long stretches of quiet while Eddie falls asleep while they're on the phone or facetimeing. For a relatively new habit, Eddie doesn't know what he'd do without it anymore.

It's even stranger how much it feels simultaneously like he and Richie do this everyday and also how remarkably different it feels to be able to reach out and touch him.

They stop at Mike's farm a few minutes after they saw the town's welcome sign. It does look big - and it looks nice, too.

They get out of the car and get their luggage out before Eddie hears Bev shouting, "Guys, they're here!" Eddie knows it's Bev, knows her voice now, and then Bill and Mike and Ben and Bev all come running out of the spacious white house, and he and Richie go to meet them, still holding hands.

“Guys!” Ben shouts, too, and he hugs them both. Then everyone’s hugging, all huddled together in one big group, and Ben has an arm around him, and Eddie thinks it might be Bev in between them, behind them. They’re surrounded by nearly all of their friends, and Eddie smiles so big it makes his face hurt.

“Hey everyone.”

“Oh my god this is the best day. I love you guys.” That’s Ben.

“We love you, too, Benny,” Richie says, and Eddie squeezes his hand.

“That’s a new one.” That’s Mike.

“We’re j-j-just missing Stan,” says Bill.

Finally they all pull back and really look at each other. Eddie and Richie are still attached at the hands, and everyone gives them a smile.

“Look at you two. Already attached. You gonna play Street Fighter one-handed, Richie?” Bev asks with a grin, and Richie grins right back at her.

“I might. I bet I’d still kick your ass.”

“My money’s on Bev,” Ben says.

“Mine too,” says Bill.

“I’m reserving judgement,” Mike says, and he puts an arm around Bill’s shoulders.

Eddie glances over at Richie. “I mean, I’m pretty sure I’m required to put my money on Rich, so.”

“That makes it sound like you don’t have any faith in me. I’m wounded, Eds.”

“Oh shut up,” Eddie says, and he leans over and kisses Richie on the cheek, just because he can. Richie’s skin is smooth and warm under his lips, and then Richie blushes, which makes it even more worth it.

“Richie Tozier blushing! I never knew I’d see the day,” Mike says, and they all laugh together.

It’s a nice sound, all his friends’ laughter mingled together. Eddie thinks he could get used to that. Maybe they should all start watching stuff over skype, or find a way to do group video chat. He thinks maybe he’ll suggest it when they all have to leave.

“Why don’t you guys come on in and I’ll show you your room - I figured you wouldn’t mind sharing a room.” Mike lets go of Bill and

leaves the others outside, gesturing for Richie and Eddie to follow him.

“Nah, sounds perfect,” Richie says.

“One bed alright?”

Eddie thinks about actually falling sleep next to Richie, instead of just over the phone. “Sounds perfect,” he echoes.

The room that Mike leads them to is nice and clean. Everything’s a pale blue color, and the sheets are pressed, unwrinkled. There’s a bathroom right down the hall from them, but not one in their actual bedroom. Eddie thinks that’ll probably be okay. Normally shared bathrooms sort of make him want to shrivel up and die, but getting to live with his friends for an entire week kind of overrides that.

Mike leaves them in the room, and they both put down their bags, and then they’re alone again. They let go of each other’s hands to put their suitcases down on chairs on either side of the room, but then they’re moving back towards each other like they can’t stand to be apart - and maybe they can’t. Eddie can’t.

He ends up with his arms around Richie’s waist again, and Richie has his hands on Eddie’s face.

“You wanna kiss now? I mean we could be really romantic and wait until New Year’s, but. I don’t exactly wanna wait that long.”

“Me neither. Sorry if I’m shit.”

“I’m sure you’re not gonna be shit.”

Richie leans in, and they’re kissing. At first it sort of feels like nothing - just lips pressed together, sort of dry and. Well, nice, but nothing special. Only even just thinking that makes Eddie realize that he’s kissing Richie, and he presses closer and leans into the kiss and moves his lips against Richie’s, wanting to be closer to him than is really possible, wanting to taste him, wanting to do everything at once.

Richie parts his lips and they’re really, really kissing, properly kissing, and Eddie feels like his skin is buzzing all over. He brings a hand up Richie’s hair and runs it through his curls. They both linger there until they absolutely have to part, and they’re breathing heavy.

They smile at each other.

“How was that for a first kiss?” Richie asks.

“Probably the best one of all time, if I had to take a guess.”

“Yeah? Good. I, uh. I guess we should go back downstairs, right?”

“I mean we can. We could always make out later. Tonight. When we all go to bed. You know?”

“Why Edward, you’re so forward,” Richie says in a stupid British accent, and Eddie cracks up laughing, nearly doubled over except Richie’s in his way so he’s just leaning his forehead against Richie’s chest and giggling helplessly.

“You’re such an idiot, I hate you so much.”

“Mm, you love me.”

Eddie looks up at him and smiles. “Yeah. Yeah, I do.”

Leaning up, Eddie kisses him again, and then they walk back downstairs hand in hand.

When they get outside, Stan is there, and everyone’s standing in a circle talking.

“Th-th-there you guys are. Didn’t you hear us calling you?”

“Nah we were too busy making out, sorry.”

Eddie smacks Richie on the arm but Richie just grins as they go over

and pull Stan into a hug. He goes reluctantly, muttering something, and then all of them are hugging again - all seven of them this time.

“I’m gonna suffocate in here if you guys don’t get off of me,” Stan says, and they all smile at him as they pull away.

It’s evening by now, and it’s starting to get dusky outside. Eddie looks at the sunset and squeezes Richie’s hand. He really can hear Mike’s chickens in the distance - that voice message wasn’t wrong. Everything is familiar and surreal all at once.

Mike leads Stan inside, and everyone else just looks at each other.

“You know what the plan for tonight is, Billiam?”

“I think M-m-mike’s idea was that we should just stay in. Maybe watch some movies. Tomorrow night is New Year’s Eve after all, so w-we’ll be up late.”

“That makes sense,” Eddie says. It’s starting to get a little chilly out, so Eddie puts an arm around Richie and presses closer against his side. Richie’s arm goes around Eddie’s shoulders almost automatically, which is nicer than Eddie had ever realized it would be.

After a few minutes, they all head in, and they find Mike setting up the TV. The living room is a nice set up, with enough seats for everyone. Of course, Richie finds an armchair and immediately pulls

Eddie into it with him. Eddie ends up half in his lap, but he just smiles and wiggles in the seat until he's comfortable.

Mike says, "I figured we could order pizza, because you can at least do that in Derry, and then we could watch movies. I've got old and new stuff here, stuff you guys have at least mentioned you like. There should be something for everyone - not that we can watch seven different movies, but there's at least some overlap I know."

"You just give me a shitty horror movie, or even better a horror comedy, and I'll be content."

"Well, good news, Richie, Derry still has a video rental store and I got Army of Darkness just for you."

"Mike, you're my hero."

Eddie turns to Richie and blinks at him. "And what am I?" he asks quietly.

"Well you're my boyfriend, Eds." Richie turns and nips at Eddie's earlobe, which is just weird enough to make Eddie laugh and duck his head, even as it makes him blush.

Stan comes back downstairs, and they all bicker over pizza. Stan has to get one without cheese, Eddie has to get one without meat, Richie wants pineapple because of fucking course he does. They all eventually settle on Stan getting his own smaller pizza, and then

getting one cheese and one pepperoni for the group, but only after Richie has been appropriately shamed for his terrible taste in pizza.

“I should really break up with you, pineapple pizza should really be a dealbreaker.”

Richie wraps his arms around Eddie’s waist. “You would never.”

Eddie sighs, and leans further against him. “No, you’re right, I wouldn’t. Unfortunately.”

They talk and joke until the pizza gets there, and it turns out their dynamic goes as smoothly in person as it does online. It’s like the thought he had earlier about Richie but on a larger, more surprising scale. This, too, feels like they all get together every weekend, but also somehow like something completely surreal. It’s wonderful. Eddie’s having the time of his life.

Once everyone’s got food, they start the first movie. They watch *The Breakfast Club*, which pretty much all of them love, then *Army of Darkness*, because Richie loves it but Bill loves horror movies too, then they end up finishing with *Grand Budapest Hotel*, because Eddie and Stan both love Wes Anderson movies and they’ve grown on everyone else. After that they’re all kind of exhausted, probably just from travel as much as anything else, because it’s only about midnight - which means it’s even earlier for Richie.

They all say goodnight and go to bed, and Richie and Eddie shuffle around each other awkwardly while they get ready for bed. Ultimately, they lay down and settle in, and then they turn to each

other, face to face in the moonlight that comes through the window.

"I know you're right there, but also I can't believe you're here," Eddie says quietly.

"Mm, I know the feeling."

They reach for each other, and Eddie's hands are in Richie's hair and on his waist, and Richie's got one hand at Eddie's collarbone, and then they're kissing again.

They fall asleep kissing.

When they wake up, Eddie's still fuzzy from sleep, and from a nice dream that only left subtle impressions of Richie's hands on his mind. He's got his face against Richie's shoulder, and an arm slung over his waist, and their legs are all tangled together. He has no idea what time it is. It's perfect.

Eddie drifts off again, and wakes up to Richie looking down at him and smiling. They kiss briefly before they get up and start getting ready, because it's already after noon when they finally check their phones. They're more comfortable together now. Falling asleep together and finding out it worked for them seems to have settled anything that was still sort of unsettled.

When they do make it downstairs, there's leftover pancakes that Bill and Mike apparently made that morning for everyone, and the two of

them eat before they go hunting for everyone and find them with the chickens. Mike still needs to do stuff around the farm, and everyone agrees to help.

The chickens, frankly, make Eddie a little anxious, but Richie picks one up and tries to do some kind of dumb voice for it, and everyone laughs and tells him to shut up, and it's adorable.

By the time they've finished feeding animals and cleaning and getting the full tour of the farm, it's dusk again, and they decide it's time to go into the barn and set up their New Year's party. Bev's brought liquor from her aunt's house, and they all pass around the bottle of vodka. Eddie mixes his with orange juice, while Richie just pours some in a cup, knocks it back and shudders.

One bottle isn't enough to get any of them drunk, but they all get pleasantly tipsy. Eddie's warm and loose, and he presses his face against Richie's neck and listens to everyone else talking and the music Bev brought playing in the background.

"No, s-seriously, that comic I did was totally real. I told someone in my class that I made webcomics and he asked me if I made Homestuck."

Stan says, "I can't believe you actually said the name of it, Bill. I'm pretty sure it's cursed. Like Macbeth. You're gonna get this barn burned to the ground."

"Well now you said the M play, Staniel, so we're all fucked," Richie says. Eddie can feel his voice, where he's pressed against him, and

that's nice, too.

"Usually in theater it's called the Scottish play, Richie."

"Who gives a fuck what I call it, Bevjamin, if I don't actually use the name?"

"I can't believe you just used that nickname in real life, it sounds so fucking stupid."

"Well, so do I, it's only fitting."

Eddie smacks Richie's arm for that, and when he opens his eyes, Richie is pouting at him. "Don't be dumb," Eddie says, and he leans up to kiss Richie briefly.

Bev whistles, and Richie flips her off, and they all laugh.

"Should we tell stories or something until midnight? Like ghost stories?" Ben says, and even Eddie lifts his head up at that.

He doesn't really have a ghost story to tell, but he knows Bill can tell a good one, and he knows Ben probably wouldn't have suggested it if he didn't at least have one.

Bill does go first, and his story is clearly made up, but it's still good enough that he should probably type it up and make a creepypasta out of it or something, but Eddie isn't sure that website is much of a thing anymore, even though he used to read it in high school. It's one about a monster that can take the form of whatever someone fears most - they all tell him he should at least write it down.

Ben goes next, and tells them about about how he suspects the basement in his library is haunted. He heard a kid laughing once, thought he saw one running. It's enough to get a shiver out of Eddie.

Mike, surprisingly, goes after that. He has one about the old abandoned factory he took Bev to. Apparently he's gone out there before, running an errand for his grandfather, and he swears he saw eyes and heard something that sounded like giant wings flapping in one of the smokestacks that had fallen on its side.

"M-m-maybe it was just bats," Bill says, because they can all tell they're genuinely a little creeped out.

"Not with eyes like that," Mike says quietly. None of them know how to follow that - but then it turns out it's nearly midnight, so they don't have to. Ben's sitting by Bev, Mike and Bill are holding hands, and Eddie's still leaned up against Richie. Stan's got his arms around his knees, but he looks happy enough, smiling at all of them once the beginning of the countdown has broken the tension.

"One more minute," Bev says, keeping track with her phone.

Eddie turns to look at Richie, and Richie looks right back at him.

"I'm glad I'm here with you," Eddie says.

"Nowhere else I'd rather be, Eds."

When it's down to ten seconds, they all say it together, grinning around at each other, and then Bill and Mike kiss before the countdown is completely over. Eddie turns to Richie, and then they're kissing, too. They try not to go overboard, and Eddie pulls back, and he can tell from the way that Ben is blushing and laughing that he and Bev probably kissed, too, just something silly, for the sake of it.

Stan is looking at all of them, fond but exasperated.

Eddie looks back at Richie again and smiles at him, and he knows it's a dopey, tipsy sort of smile. "Happy New Year, Rich."

"Happy New Year, Eds."

Notes for the Chapter:

so sorry this is later than usual! i was on the road all day to go out of town for the weekend, but here it is finally! longer than usual and hopefully rewarding since it's the chapter you've all been waiting for!! let me know what you think :')

10. leaving derry

Summary for the Chapter:

the losers have a hell of a week and eddie has some news

Notes for the Chapter:

here it is, everybody. the last chapter. i hope you all enjoy it <3

The week that all of them spend in Derry is the best week of Eddie Kaspbrak's life, without question. At night, they watch movies all piled in Mike's living room, just like their first night, and they bicker over choices. He and Richie even manage to bully everyone into watching Ghostbusters for about their 80th time as a group, since they've ended up watching that one almost every time Richie or Eddie runs the rabb.it room. It's still better in person, hearing Richie say all the lines, getting to say them all along with everyone else.

One day, about midway through the week, they all pile in Mike and Bev's cars and go into town. The arcade is in the foyer of the one theater apparently, so they all decide they'll go to the arcade and then see a movie in the evening. Richie and Bev have an intense Street Fighter tournament, and Eddie does document the whole thing on snapchat. Bev kicks his ass, and then just for fun, they play a round where Richie does play one handed, his other hand securely in Eddie's, and that's the one round he actually wins. From then on, he drags Eddie around to every arcade machine, claiming he's a lucky charm.

The two of them play one of those little sit-in arcade games with curtains on either side, and when Richie dies in the game and runs out of tokens, he leans over and starts distracting Eddie with kisses. They linger there in the blue-ish LED light of the arcade screen,

kissing, until Bev pushes aside the curtain and yells, "They're in here!" Which causes Mike to whistle at them, and Bill elbows him, and Ben laughs, and Stan rolls his eyes.

Eddie plays pinball with Richie draped over his back, chin over his shoulder. Then, finally, when everyone else is starting to get bored, Richie drags Eddie into a photo booth, and they take a series of pictures together, kissing each other on the cheek and surprising each other into laughter, and Eddie knows when he sees the pictures that he'll keep the photo strip for the rest of his life.

When it's finally time for the movies to start, they bicker back and forth over what to see. Justice League is still on, but Mike and Bill want to see the new Star Wars. Eddie and Stan both agree that they're personally more Star Trek than Star Wars people, but Richie sort of wants to see it, too, and Bev's in love with Rey, and Ben doesn't have a strong preference, so they end up seeing Star Wars after all.

Eddie watches Richie more than he watches the movie, and sometimes Richie will lean over and whisper something to him, and Eddie just keeps thinking about how they could do this every day.

Every night when he and Richie are alone together, they watch BuzzFeed Unsolved or dumb youtube videos or they kiss or they just lay there and talk, or sometimes they even fit in all three before they fall asleep on each other. Still, even when they're talking, or Richie starts doing dumb voices just to watch Eddie laugh, Richie doesn't ask about what Eddie wanted to talk to him about. Either he's forgotten, or he's letting Eddie take his time.

Eddie appreciates it, but he sort of wonders if he could have used the push.

It's their next to last night when Eddie, laying there, finally turns to Richie and says, "Rich. Remember when I said I had something I wanted to say?"

"You were gonna wait and tell me in Maine. Yeah. Something other than. This? Us?"

"Oh. Yeah." Maybe that's it, then. Why Richie didn't ask. Eddie is too nervous to look at Richie - he stares up at the ceiling instead, but reaches over and takes Richie's hand. "I... During this semester. I maybe. Put in for a transfer to UCLA. Just to. See?"

"You what?" Richie's voice cracks a little, and Eddie glances over at him, but has to look away again.

"Well I. It wasn't just for you, I had to... I thought about it a lot, and if I wanna stick with the idea I have of app devloping and all that kind of stuff, if I wanna stick with what I'm good at, being out near Silicon Valley could be useful. And there's a program there that's good. And it might even be nicer to get away from my mom, and she hates California, she says she won't move there. So I decided to put in, but it wouldn't have worked, still, if I didn't get in or didn't get enough money, but..."

"But you got in?"

"With... with a full ride, actually. For the transfer. So. Um. I'm starting after break."

"This is why you said it wasn't gonna be a problem. The distance."

"...Yeah."

Eddie finally manages to look over at Richie properly, and his expression is pretty unreadable. Eddie tries to swallow down his nerves.

"Unless. You don't want me to. I... I wanted to talk to you, because. Because if that's too weird, or you think I'm too weird, or after this week, you do want things to stay in Maine. I. I can understand any of that."

"Eds, oh my god," Richie says, and then he's rolling over, on top of Eddie, and Eddie's looking up at him, and Richie's eyes are glassy, and his grin is so bright Eddie feels like he may go blind. "Eds. I love you. I love you so fucking much, please, you can stay at my place til you find somewhere else, I'll bring you coffee whenever you need it, I'll take you to the movies every weekend-"

"So you don't mind?" Richie kisses him, hard, and Eddie presses up, kissing him back. "Rich, that's not an answer," he murmurs between kisses.

"Yes, fucking. Of course, yes, please come to California, please go to school with me, I'll make it worth it, I won't fuck it up, I swear."

"Of course you're not gonna fuck it up, idiot," Eddie says, tugging gently at Richie's curls. He tilts his head and presses a kiss against Richie's temple. "I'm actually. Already moved out in New York, by the way. I asked my mom if she would ship my stuff. It's not. It's not that I was that confident, I was scared, but. Once I got in, I really did wanna go. Anyways my point was, ah. We can leave Derry together if you want. I can get a ticket on your flight."

"Eds," Richie says again quietly, and he sounds utterly overwhelmed.

"I know it's not. God, are you sure this isn't too much?"

"Eds, I wouldn't. I would never have had the guts to just move to New York like that. I could do the same shit there, but I would have been too scared to put together something like this. Of course I wanna be close to you, but I always feel like you're gonna fucking. Come to your senses. If you wanna come to LA... I mean it. I'm gonna do my best to make sure you don't regret it."

"You're being dumb again," Eddie replies simply, even though he's overwhelmed, too.

He kisses Richie again, slowly, and they both linger.

"I love you," Richie says.

"Love you, too, Rich."

"I mean it that you should move in with me. I mean. At least. For a while. If you-"

"I don't have anywhere else to stay, so yes I'm moving in with you. For as long as you'll have me. Until you get annoyed with my complete inability to do dishes because I gag if I even see food left on a plate."

"Mm, good news, I've got a dishwasher, so I guess you're staying forever."

It feels so whirlwind, all of this, because they've only been able to touch for a week - but they've known each other for years. Richie has been the first person Eddie tells everything to since he was still in high school. The first person he talks to in the morning, and the last one he talks to before he falls asleep. Even when Richie annoys him, he can't stay mad for longer than a few days. He can't imagine a world where this could go so horribly wrong he could ever come to regret it.

They fall asleep tangled up, again.

The next day is the last day that all seven of them have together, and Mike takes them out to the quarry. It's too cold to swim, but they all find a place to splash around and sit on the rocks. Bev brings her speakers, and they all dance.

Stan dares Richie to jump in the water, and of course the idiot

actually does it. Mike, who was prepared for his friends to be idiots, brings over a towel and Eddie helps Richie dry off and warm up so he doesn't get fucking hypothermia.

"You're an idiot," he tells Richie as he towels his curls.

"But I'm your idiot," comes Richie's voice, muffled under the towel.

"Yes, unfortunately," Eddie sighs, and he removes the towel so he can press a kiss to Richie's damp curls.

That night they go back to the farm and agree to stay up til the sun rises - some of them have to leave that early anyways. They sit out in the barn and tell stories and jokes. Richie and Eddie tell everyone that Eddie's moving to LA, and not a single one of the other losers seem apprehensive - they all cheer, and Mike pats Eddie on the back. When it is time for the sunrise, they all go outside to watch it, and they end up all holding hands, standing in a line. It's silly, but it feels right in the moment - a moment Eddie knows they'll all remember.

Then Richie starts singing The Beatles' "Here Comes the Sun," and everyone cracks up, and Eddie and Bev both give him a shove.

Before Ben and Stan have to leave for the airport, they all come together for one last group hug - all seven of them. Stan doesn't pretend to be unaffected this time, and they all hold onto each other tightly, and promise they'll make plans to meet up again as soon as they can.

What he has with Richie is special, and distinct from the group as a whole, and he's grateful for it, but Eddie also knows these are the best friends he'll ever have. These are the people he loves most in the world, all there with him, in this moment, and he wants them all to stay in touch for the rest of their lives.

Richie's flight out, which is now Eddie's flight out, isn't until later that night. Richie had admitted in the quiet that morning that he'd wanted to spend as much time with Eddie as he could - fortunately that wasn't going to be a problem anymore.

When they leave, Bill and Mike and Bev are still all there to see them off, and they all hug again and congratulate Richie and Eddie as they pull away in the taxi Mike called for them.

With some shuffling around, meaning they stand at kiosks next to each other and pick seats carefully, they get seats next to each other on the plane.

They spend some time fucking around the airport stores, Richie trying on sunglasses and coming up with voices for each one while Eddie laughs at him, and even tries some out himself. When it's time to board, they get on the plane, store their luggage, and sit down. They put up the armrest so they can hold hands, and so Eddie can lean against Richie's shoulder, exhausted, even as he's excited about all they have to look forward to once they land in LA.

The plane takes off, and they leave Derry together.

Notes for the Chapter:

the reception on this fic has been so much more than

i ever expected, and the reactions and comments and stuff i've gotten have all been so unbelievably kind. i just wanted to say thank you again to everyone who's read and commented, because i appreciate it, truly, more than i can say <3 i have more fics planned or in progress that i'll start posting as soon as i can, but i'm sad to say goodbye to this one. still, i hope you've all enjoyed it as much as i have.